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FOR EA
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SECDEF FOR SENATOR MURKOWSKI
USCINCPAC FOR USIA ADVISOR

EO 12356: N/A
SUBJECT : TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS CONFERENCE OF
- CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION LED BY SENATOR
- FRANK MURKOWSKI

A PRESS CONFERENCE WAS HELD BY MEMBERS OF A
CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION LED BY SENATOR FRANK
MURKOWSKI AT THE ORIENTAL HOTEL IN BANGKOK ON JANUARY
20. IN ADDITION TO SENATOR MURKOWSKI, CODEL
PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED SENATOR DENNIS DECONCINI,
REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL BILIRAKIS, AND REPRESENTATIVE
ROBERT MCEWEN.
(BEGIN TRANSCRIPT)

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: THANK YOU VERY MUCH. WE'RE VERY
PLEASED TO BE IN BANGKOK. WE THINK THAT WE HAVE HAD
A VERY INFORMATIVE AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IN OUR
VISIT TO BOTH VIENTIANE AND HANOI. I THINK
CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS OCCURRED. I WOULD SHARE WITH
MY COLLEAGUES AND, OF COURSE, OUR AMBASSADOR --
AMBASSADOR BROWN. BUT FIRST LET ME INTRODUCE...ON MY
LEFT, SENATOR DECONCINI, OF ARIZONA, WHO IS ON THE
VETERANS COMMITTEE WITH ME; ON MY RIGHT,
REPRESENTATIVE MCEWEN. REPRESENTATIVE MCEWEN IS FROM
THE GREAT STATE OF OHIO, AND ON MY FAR LEFT, NOT
QUITE FROM THE DEEP SOUTH, BUT PRETTY CLOSE TO IT,
REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL BILIRAKIS. I AM FRANK
MURKOWSKI FROM THE STATE OF ALASKA.

LET ME GIVE A BRIEF OVERVIEW IF I COULD. WE ARE

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PLEASED WITH OUR GENERAL PROGRESS IN THE SENSE OF THE MANY QUESTIONS THAT WE DID ASK, THE ANSWERS THAT WE RECEIVED. WHILE WE DIDN'T GET ALL THE ANSWERS THAT WE HOPED TO RECEIVE, I THINK THEY WERE VERY INFORMATIONAL.

ON A POSITIVE NOTE, THE ISSUE OF REMAINS IN BOTH VIENTIANE AND HANOI IS GOING TO BE MEANINGFUL IN THE SENSE THAT THE VIETNAMESE INDICATED THAT THE FEBRUARY MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES ON JOINT EXCAVATIONS WOULD OCCUR. IT WAS EMPHATIC THAT THAT WAS A MESSAGE TO US THAT HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN COMMUNICATED TO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT (THROUGH) SECRETARY ARMITAGE. THEY HOPED AS A RESULT THAT ABOUT 50 SPECIFIC CASES WHERE THE COUNTRYSIDE HAD BEEN ASKED FOR INFORMATION AND THEY HAD RECEIVED INFORMATION, THEY HOPED TO HAVE AT THE FEBRUARY MEETING SOME POSITIVE INFORMATION AND REMAINS BEING TURNED OVER TO OUR GOVERNMENT. WE COULD NOT PIN THEM DOWN SPECIFICALLY AS TO THE AMOUNT.

IN LAOS, WE ALSO GOT REINFORCEMENTS THAT THE TWO DIGGINGS THAT WERE SCHEDULED WOULD OCCUR. THE SIGHTINGS HAD BEEN MADE IN BOTH COUNTRIES, THE EXCAVATIONS WOULD BE JOINT. OF A DISAPPOINTING NATURE, ON LIVE SIGHTINGS I THINK IT FAIR TO SAY THAT WE DID NOT RECEIVE ANY CONCRETE SUPPORT CONCERNING LIVE SIGHTINGS IN EITHER VIETNAM OR LAOS. THAT DOESN'T MEAN FOR ONE MOMENT THAT THERE MAY NOT BE LIVING AMERICANS IN EITHER COUNTRY, BUT THE FACTS ARE THAT BOTH THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT AND THE LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT EMPHATICALLY DENIED THE EXISTENCE OF AMERICANS. SENATOR DECONCINI ASKED A VERY APPROPRIATE QUESTION TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER, WHETHER OR NOT THEY WOULD ALLOW SENATOR DECONCINI TO GO INTO THE COUNTRY IF THERE WAS ENOUGH PROOF TO WARRANT IT, AND I WAS VERY PLEASED, DENNIS, TO NOTE THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID, "I WILL TAKE YOU IN." BUT HE SAID "NO OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS." IF WE HAVE EVIDENCE, WHILE EACH MEMBER CAN RESPOND ACCORDINGLY, WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO PRESS THAT POINT.

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ANOTHER REINFORCEMENT, I THINK, WAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE BREAKFAST IN HANOI HOSTED BY THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR. THERE WERE FIVE OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN NATIONS REPRESENTED, INCLUDING THE ITALIANS, BELGIANS, FRENCH AND THE WEST GERMANS. WE DISCUSSED AT GREAT LENGTH THE ISSUE OF THE LIVE SIGHTINGS OF AMERICANS. THEY HAVE CONSIDERABLE ACCESS TO VIETNAM. THEY INDICATED THEY HAD NOTHING THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE US. FINALLY THERE WAS NO LINKAGE ON THE ISSUE OF MIA OR NORMALCY OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH VIETNAM. THE ISSUES WERE NOT CONNECTED, AND THE MIA ISSUE, OF COURSE, STANDS ON ITS OWN; IT MUST BE RESOLVED TO OUR SATISFACTION.

TO COMPLEMENT THAT RESOLVE, I WILL BE CONDUCTING HEARINGS AS CHAIRMAN OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE IN WASHINGTON UPON MY RETURN. SENATOR DECONCINI, AS

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WELL AS MY TWO HOUSE COLLEAGUES, WILL BE PARTICIPATING. WE INTEND THAT THOSE HEARINGS WILL ACT AS A FORUM. WE WOULD INVITE THOSE WITH INFORMATION OF LIVE SIGHTINGS TO MAKE THEIR PRESENCE AND INFORMATION KNOWN. WE WOULD EXPECT RESPONSE FROM THE ADMINISTRATION. WE HAVE OBSERVED IN HAWAII THE TREMENDOUS CAPABILITY AND THE INFORMATION BANK THAT OUR ADMINISTRATION HAS, AND I WOULD HOPE THAT WOULD SERVE AS A FORUM FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO FOCUS IN ON THE ISSUE OF LIVE SIGHTINGS. AND IF THERE IS FURTHER DETAIL THAT CAN COME OUT OF THAT, WE HAVE HAD ASSURANCES FROM BOTH THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF LAOS THAT THEY WILL FOLLOW UP ON ANY FACTUAL INFORMATION. OTHER SUBJECTS THAT WERE DISCUSSED, AND I THINK SOME PROGRESS MADE INCLUDES THE ORDERLY DEPARTURE PROGRAM. WE HAVE REASON TO THINK THAT THERE WILL BE MEETINGS THAT WILL BEGIN WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK OR TWO. WE OF COURSE EXPRESSED A GREAT DEAL OF INTEREST IN EXPEDITING THE REFUGEE ISSUE, THE AMERASIAN ISSUE, AND WE OFFERED TO, THROUGH OUR STATE DEPARTMENT, TO FOLLOW UP ON THE ISSUE OF US HELPING BOTH THE VIETNAMESE AND THE LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT IN EXAMINING THEIR UNACCOUNTED FOR WITH OUR TREMENDOUS TECHNICAL CAPABILITY IN THAT AREA. I THINK THAT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE NOW TO CALL ON MY COLLEAGUE, SENATOR DECONCINI, FOR HIS OBSERVATIONS, AND I ASSURE YOU THESE GENTLEMEN MADE A VERY SIGNIFICANT JOINT CONTRIBUTION IN THIS EFFORT.

SENATOR DECONCINI: CHAIRMAN MURKOWSKI, THANK YOU. AND THANK YOU, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE, AND WE APPRECIATE YOUR COMING OUT TO DISCUSS ISSUES AND ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS. I WANT TO THANK THE CHAIRMAN. I AGREE WITH HIS OVERALL SUMMARY OF WHAT OCCURRED. IT WAS POSITIVE AS TO THE REMAINS. I WAS EXTREMELY DISAPPOINTED AS ONE MEMBER AT THE ABSOLUTE REFUSAL, EXCEPT PERSONALLY, FOR US TO COME IN AND DO ON-SIGHT INSPECTIONS OR TO HAVE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DO THAT AS WAS RAISED BY CONGRESSMAN MCEWEN.

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT DELEGATION IN MY JUDGMENT. IT'S A MIXED DELGATION OF BOTH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MEMBERS AND THE UNITED STATES SENATE, BOTH REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS. I HAPPEN TO BE THE SOLE MINORITY MEMBER HERE OF THE DEMOCRATS. WE EXPRESSED A UNIFIED VOICE IN THE IMPORTANCE OF DEALING WITH THE MIA AND POW.

THE QUESTION OF LINKAGE CONTINUOUSLY ARISES. THE VIETNAMESE FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSED THAT IF THERE WERE ANY LINKAGE OF NORMALIZATION WITH THIS SO-CALLED

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HUMANITARIAN EFFORT THAT IS GOING ON THE HUMANITARIAN EFFORT WOULD CEASE. HOWEVER, HE ALSO INDICATES TIME AND TIME AGAIN IN A CRITICAL MANNER THAT THE UNITED STATES FAILS TO HAVE ANY KIND OF COMMUNICATION WITH THEM TOWARDS NORMALIZATION, THAT IT'S ONLY A ONE-WAY STREET. AND THEN HE POINTS TO THE PARTICULAR

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HUMANITARIAN THINGS THAT THEY ARE DOING. WE ARE THANKFUL THAT THEY HAVE APPROACHED THIS IN A MEANINGFUL WAY IN A HUMANITARIAN EFFORT. BUT THE REALITY IN THE UNITED STATES IS THAT UNTIL THE POW/MIA PROBLEM IS RESOLVED, UNTIL, IN THIS SENATOR'S JUDGEMENT, THERE IS SOMEONE WHO CAN GO IN AND SEE FOR THEMSELVES, THERE IS NOT GOING TO BE A GREAT IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN VIETNAM AND THE UNITED STATES.

IN THAILAND, WE ARE PLEASED TO BE HERE. WE REALIZE THE VERY SENSITIVE ISSUE OF THE FARM LEGISLATION THAT WAS PASSED, AND WE UNDERSTAND THERE MAY BE QUESTIONS ON THAT SUBJECT MATTER. I WANT TO EXPRESS, CERTAINLY FROM THE DELEGATION, BUT FROM MY OWN VIEW, THAT THAILAND IS A STRONG ECONOMIC FRIEND, A DEMOCRATIC NATION PLEDGED TO SO MANY OF THE SAME PRINCIPLES AS THE UNITED STATES. THERE IS A STRONG FEELING AMONG THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TOWARDS THE PEOPLE OF THAILAND. THAT FARM LEGISLATION WAS NOT DIRECTED TOWARDS ANY OF OUR TRADING PARTNERS. IT WAS AN ECONOMIC NECESSITY ARISING OUT OF A DRASTIC AGRICULTURAL DECLINE IN THE UNITED STATES. WITH THAT, I WILL BE GLAD TO YIELD TO CONGRESSMAN MCEWEN.

CONGRESSMAN MCEWEN: THANK YOU, SENATOR. I BELIEVE THAT YOU BOTH HAVE COVERED THE POINTS VERY WELL, AND I WOULD SECOND THEM, PARTICULARLY THE STATEMENT ABOUT OUR LONGSTANDING FRIENDSHIP AND CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE PEOPLE OF THAILAND. IT'S A PLEASURE TO BE HERE AND TO USE IT AS A PLACE TO BE RE-VITALIZED. WE HAVE COME BACK TO THE WESTERN WORLD INTO THE DEMOCRACY AND THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN FREELY OPERATE IN AN OPEN ECONOMY. OUR VISITS TO HANOI WERE REVEALING, OUR VISITS TO VIENTIANE WERE ENLIGHTENING AS WELL. IT WAS APPARENT THAT THEIR NEGOTIATING STANCE IS THAT THEY HAVE THEIR OWN AGENDA, AND IN VIENTIANE THE LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT WAS EVEN UNWILLING NOT ONLY TO TAKE A THIRD PARTY OF THEIR CHOOSING TO INVESTIGATE THE RUMORS AND REPORTS CONCERNING AMERICANS MISSING IN ACTION, BUT THEY EVEN DECLINED TO ACCEPT THE OFFER THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF HANOI ACCEPTED. WE WERE SUSPECT AS WELL AND NOT INVITED TO VISIT THE COUNTRYSIDE OF LAOS. AS I SAY, IT WAS REVEALING, IT WAS ENLIGHTENING, AND IT'S A PLEASURE TO BE HERE. I LOOK FORWARD TO RESPONDING TO YOUR QUESTIONS.

CONGRESSMAN BILIRAKIS: JUST GOING BACK TO SENATOR DECONCINI'S COMMENT ABOUT HIS BEING IN THE MINORITY STRIKES ME AS BEING AWFULLY ODD BECAUSE WE HOUSE MEMBERS ARE QUITE ACCUSTOMED TO BEING CONSIDERED THE MINORITY. BUT I WILL ACCEPT THAT, SIR; IT'S A GOOD FEELING.

IT CERTAINLY WAS AN HONOR TO HAVE BEEN ASKED BY SENATOR MURKOWSKI TO JOIN THE GROUP. IT'S AN INDICATION TO ME AT LEAST THAT I TAKE THIS ISSUE VERY SERIOUSLY IN THE CONGRESS AND BACK HOME. IT WAS A PRIVILEGE TO HAVE TRAVELED WITH THESE THREE GENTLEMEN AND A GREAT STAFF THAT ACCOMPANIED US. I THINK SOMETHING MAYBE SHOULD BE SAID THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST JOINT DELEGATION VISIT IN THESE TWO COUNTRIES. THE FACT THAT BOTH THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE AT THE

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SAME TIME WERE REPRESENTED, AND IT SEEMED TO HAVE IMPRESSED BOTH COUNTRIES TREMENDOUSLY, AND WE EVEN HEARD WORDS FROM THE VIETNAMESE TO THE EFFECT THAT WE ARE IN FACT THE TRUE VOICE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, AND THEY CONSIDERED US ENVOYS OF FRIENDSHIP AND PEACE.

WE ALSO FURNISHED A LIST, A LETTER ACCOMPANIED BY A LONG LIST OF MIAS FROM OUR AREAS TO FOREIGN MINISTER THACH, A LIST THAT HE ACCEPTED VERY READILY AND BASICALLY GAVE US THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WOULD GIVE HIS PERSONAL ATTENTION TO IN CONNECTION WITH THE PROMISES TWICE MADE, BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF VIETNAM TO THE EFFECT THAT IF WE HAVE A LIST OF SIGHTINGS INVOLVING PEOPLE IN OUR PARTICULAR STATE OR OUR PARTICULAR DISTRICT, THAT WE ARE INVITED TO COME BACK AND THAT HE WILL PERSONALLY ACCOMPANY US. BUT IN ADDITION TO THAT, WHEN WE MENTIONED TO HIM, AS SENATOR MURKOWSKI TOLD US EARLIER ABOUT THE SERIES OF HEARINGS COMING UP STARTING JANUARY 28 IN WASHINGTON AND IN THE OPEN PROCESS THERE AND THE PUBLIC PROCESS AND THE MEDIA BEING PRESENT AND WHAT NOT, WE SPECIFICALLY ASKED IF HE MIGHT BE RECEPTIVE TO RECEIVING SOME OF THE RESULTS OF THOSE HEARINGS AND HIS EMPHASES WERE THAT THEY WOULD LOOK INTO VERIFICATION OR LACK OF IT AND PROMPTLY COME BACK TO US, AND THIS IS SOMETHING HE GAVE US HIS WORD ON, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO THAT.

ALL IN ALL, I THINK ON BALANCE, IT WAS A VERY CONSTRUCTIVE TRIP. I KNOW THAT THE CHAIRMAN FAILED TO MENTION THE JCRC (JOINT CASUALTY RESOLUTION CENTER) RECOMMENDATION ON OUR PART, THE FACT THAT WE OFFERED TO HELP THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AND VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT AS FAR AS THE 300,000 MIAS THAT THEY HAVE AND THE DIFFICULTY IN IDENTIFICATION, AND WE OFFERED OUR FACILITIES TO THEM AND OUR EXPERTISE. THEY WEREN'T REALLY AS WARM OR DIDN'T TAKE UP ON THAT QUITE AS WARMLY AS WE MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, THEY SEEMED TO BE RECEPTIVE TO IT. I THINK THAT'S PROBABLY ALL FOR NOW AND SUPPOSE WE'LL ANSWER YOUR QUESTION.

Q. HOW LIKELY IS IT THAT YOU MIGHT BE GOING TO HANOI TO SEARCH YOURSELF, EITHER ALONE OR AS A GROUP, FOR POW'S.

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: I THINK THEY WERE VERY EXPLICIT IN COMMUNICATING THAT IT WOULD NOT BE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT; IT WOULD BE ONE OF THE FOUR OF US OR NOT MORE THAN THE FOUR OF US AND THAT WOULD DEPEND ON ENOUGH FACTUAL INFORMATION, AND THE JUDGMENT BASED ON WHAT WAS FORTHCOMING AND ALSO WHAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD. SENATOR DECONCINI, YOU BROUGHT IT UP; HOW MUCH INFORMATION DO YOU THINK IS FAIR?

SENATOR DECONCINI: IT'S A GOOD QUESTION, AND WHETHER OR NOT WE WILL RETURN WILL DEPEND ON TWO THINGS. ONE, IS THE SPECIFIC INFORMATION WE CAN PUT TOGETHER FROM CONSTITUENTS IN MY STATE WHO HAVE INFORMATION REGARDING LIVE SIGHTINGS. I KNOW SOME OF IT, AND IT SOUNDS VERY CREDIBLE, BUT I NEED TO HAVE THE SPECIFIC AREAS, VILLAGES, PEOPLE'S NAMES, WHAT HAVE YOU. IF WE CAN ASSUME THAT THAT IS PUT TOGETHER, AND I'M GOING TO BE WORKING ON THAT ON OUR RETURN, I WILL

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MAKE A PROPOSAL MYSELF AND MAYBE OTHER MEMBERS WILL
DO LIKEWISE, TO MR. THACH, SUGGESTING WHO, WHEN I
COME AND WHERE I GO AND WHAT I WANT TO SEE AND WHO I
CAN SEE IT WITH AND BRING NON-GOVERNMENTAL PEOPLE
WITH ME. IF HE ACCEPTS THAT, OF COURSE I WOULD THEN

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GO AND MAKE THAT INQUIRY.
CONGRESSMAN BILIRAKIS: I MIGHT ADD THAT THAT'S THE
RESULT OF THE DISCUSSIONS ON LIVE SIGHTINGS, AND THE
FACT THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER DID EVERYTHING HE
COULD TO IMPRESS UPON US THAT THERE CAN'T BE ANY LIVE
AMERICANS LEFT IN VIETNAM WITHIN THEIR CONTROL AND
INFLUENCE AND HE KEPT EMPHASIZING THAT SO WE RAISED
THE QUESTION OF MIGHT THERE BE SOME THAT YOU DON'T
KNOW ABOUT THAT ARE NOT WITHIN YOUR CONTROL OR
INFLUENCE. AND HE SAID AGAIN, "WE SAY NO, HOWEVER IF
YOU HAVE MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE LET US KNOW." AND
THAT LED INTO THIS TYPE OF A DISCUSSION.

Q. IN THE CASE OF THE BEST INFORMATION YOU'VE GOT
ABOUT LIVE SIGHTINGS, DOES THAT INCLUDE VILLAGES,
TIME, CASE AND PLACES. CAN YOU GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE OF
WHAT IS THE BEST INFORMATION THE UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT HAS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF LIVE AMERICANS
IN LAOS OR OTHER COUNTRIES?

SENATOR DECONCINI: MUCH OF THE INFORMATION THAT I
HAVE FROM OUR GOVERNMENT IS IN A CLASSIFIED NATURE.
INFORMATION THAT I HAVE FROM MY CONSTITUENTS DOES
POINT TO VILLAGES MOSTLY IN THE SOUTH AND ALSO SOME
TRANSFERS INTO THE NORTH WITH THE NAMES AND EVEN A
MAP WHERE THEY ARE. BUT I DO NOT HAVE NAMES OF
PEOPLE THAT I WOULD WANT TO BE ABLE TO VERIFY, THE
LIVE SIGHTING THAT WAS GIVEN OVER TO US THROUGH THAT
VILLAGE ON A CERTAIN DATE, AND WE HAVE CERTAIN
DATES. AND THOSE ARE THE TYPES OF SPECIFICS THAT I
NEED IN ADDITION. BUT WE HAVE NAMES OF VILLAGES,
EVEN COMPOUNDS -- WHETHER THEY'RE STILL THERE OR NOT,
I DON'T KNOW. THOSE ARE THINGS WE'LL HAVE TO PUT
TOGETHER BEFORE WE VENTURE OFF INTO SUCH AN EFFORT,
IF WE DO AT ALL.

Q. HOW RECENT IS YOUR INFORMATION? WHAT IS THE MOST
RECENT LIVE SIGHTING?

SENATOR DECONCINI: '83, I BELIEVE, IS THE MOST
RECENT ONE I HAVE IN MY STATE. THAT WAS A BUSINESS
PERSON THAT WENT IN, AND IT'S QUESTIONABLE AS TO THE
LEGALITY OF HIS ENTRANCE. BUT THAT WAS THE
INFORMATION.

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: I THINK IT'S FAIR TO STATE IT'S
THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED
STATES THAT THERE ARE LIVING AMERICANS BELIEVED TO BE
IN VIETNAM AND LAOS, AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO BELIEVE
THAT UNTIL THERE IS EVIDENCE TO INDICATE OTHERWISE.

CONGRESSMAN MCEWEN: AND ON THAT POINT, I THINK IT'S
APPROPRIATE TO REMEMBER THAT THEIR REFUSAL TO ALLOW
AN INTERNATIONAL, HUMANITARIAN AGENCY OF THEIR

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CHOOSING TO INVESTIGATE THESE REPORTS ONLY ADDS FUEL TO THE FIRE THAT SUCH LIVING AMERICANS COULD EXIST IN VIETNAM. I TRIED TO EMPHASIZE THAT ALSO IN LAOS -- IF THERE ARE NO LIVING AMERICANS, THEN WHY DON'T YOU CHOOSE ANY RED CROSS AGENCY, ANY INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AGENCY THAT YOU WISH, LAY IT OUT THERE, LET THEM INVESTIGATE AND LET THEM COME BACK WITH THE REPORT. AND THEY DECLINED TO DO THAT, WHICH IS UNFORTUNATE, IN MY OPINION.

Q. IN LIGHT OF WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, IT SEEMS THAT IF THEY'RE NOT GOING TO LET AN INTERNATIONAL AGENCY GO IN AND MONITOR, IF YOU WENT IN, SAY ONE OF YOU WENT IN WITH THEM, WOULDN'T IT BE JUST A PUBLICITY CIRCUS FOR THEM, BECAUSE OBVIOUSLY THEY COULD CLEAR OUT ANY PEOPLE WHO WERE THERE BEFORE YOU WENT, AND IT WOULD

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SEEM IF YOU DIDN'T GO THROUGH PROPER CHANNELS, SUCH AS AN INTERNATIONAL AGENCY, YOU'RE A TOOL OF THEIR PUBLIC RELATIONS.

SENATOR DECONCINI: I'M VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THAT, IF THIS SENATOR WENT. THAT'S WHY I WOULD HAVE TO HAVE SPECIFICS OF THE NAMES OF THE VILLAGE, THE LOCATION OF THE CAMPS IF THERE WAS A PERSON THAT THE LIVE SIGHTER MIGHT HAVE SEEN OR KNOWN, THAT I COULD TALK TO AND BE ABLE TO FOLLOW THAT UP AS YOU WOULD IN ANY INVESTIGATION. BUT YOU'RE VERY CORRECT. IT DOESN'T MEAN THEY STILL COULDN'T MOVE THEM, BUT AT LEAST YOU WOULD HAVE FREE ACCESS TO QUESTION PEOPLE THAT THE LIVE SIGHTER SAW WHO WERE VIETNAMESE. AT LEAST, THAT'S HOW I WOULD APPROACH IT.

Q. IN YOUR VISIT TO THE JCRC CENTER IN HAWAII OR FROM OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION HAVE YOU RECEIVED ANY INDICATION THAT ANY OF THE REMAINS TURNED OVER SO FAR FROM THE VIETNAMESE SHOWED EVIDENCE OF HAVING BEEN WAREHOUSED OR HAVING BEEN HELD FOR SOME TIME, RATHER THAN FOUND IMMEDIATELY BEFORE REPATRIATION? SENATOR MURKOWSKI: I THINK THAT QUESTION CAN BEST BE LEFT TO THOSE WHO HAVE THE SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND EXAMINE THE REMAINS AND CAN, WITHOUT QUALIFICATION, ADDRESS A QUESTION OF THAT NATURE.

Q. WOULD NOT INDICATIONS OF THIS SORT AFFECT HOW YOU APPROACH THE VIETNAMESE ON THESE QUESTIONS?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: I THINK IT'S FAIR TO SAY THE OBJECTIVE CURRENTLY IS TO TRY AND ENCOURAGE AN ATMOSPHERE WHERE AS MANY REMAINS AS POSSIBLE CAN BE RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE, AND ANYTHING THAT WOULD DETRACT FROM THAT WOULD OBVIOUSLY NOT BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THOSE LOVED ONES WHO ARE STILL HOPING THAT THERE CAN BE A MIRACLE.

SENATOR DECONCINI: LET ME FOLLOW UP THAT I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE GET THE REMAINS BACK, AND I THINK THAT'S THE POINT SENATOR MURKOWSKI ABLY MAKES. MY OWN OPINION IS: YES, THEY HAVE THEM, BUT I DON'T

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CARE WHETHER THEY HAVE THEM OR THEY DON'T. WHAT I WANT TO DO IS ENCOURAGE THEM, AND IT IS ENCOURAGING THAT THEY ARE RETURNING SOME AND MAY RETURN MORE.

CONGRESSMAN BILIRAKIS: IS THERE ANY HARM IN TALKING ABOUT THE CONDITION OF THE I.D. CARDS, SENATOR?

SENATOR DECONCINI: GO AHEAD.

CONGRESSMAN BILIRAKIS: DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS, BUT WE SAW A GROUP OF I.D. - IDENTIFICATION - CARDS THAT LOOKED LIKE THEY WERE IN PRETTY DARN GOOD SHAPE.

Q. COULD I GET ON TO NORMALIZATION? AM I RIGHT IN SAYING THAT YOU GET THE IMPRESSION THE VIETNAMESE ARE INTERESTED IN NORMALIZATION, AND THE AMERICANS ARE NOT INTERESTED IN NORMALIZATION UNTIL THE MIA ISSUE IS COMPLETED. DID YOU GET ANYTHING FROM THE VIETNAMESE, AFTER NORMALIZATION, WHAT THEY WOULD GAIN, WHAT THEY WANT FROM WASHINGTON?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: I THINK IT FAIR TO SAY OUR EFFORTS WERE DIRECTED IN A HUMANITARIAN ASPECT ON THE ISSUE OF THE MIA, AND THERE WERE NO CONDITIONAL DISCUSSIONS ABOUT QUID PRO QUO INVOLVED. OBVIOUSLY THIS QUESTION HAS COME UP, IT WAS RELATED IN DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN SECRETARY ARMITAGE AND SECRETARY

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WOLFOWITZ. THIS WAS NOT OUR MISSION. THE MIA ISSUE STANDS ON ITS OWN; IT MUST BE RESOLVED TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE UNITED STATES, AND THE QUESTION OF THE NORMAL RELATIONSHIP WITH VIETNAM WAS NOT A PART OF OUR MISSION.

Q. EVEN NOT, COULD WE GO ON IN THE FUTURE. WHAT CAN WASHINGTON POSSIBLY GAIN BY ANY KIND OF NORMALIZATION WITH VIETNAM? IS THE FEELING IN CONGRESS THAT VIETNAM CAN DO NOTHING FOR THE UNITED STATES, SO JUST PERHAPS BENIGN NEGLECT OR EVEN NEGLECT IS GOING TO BE THE ANSWER?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: MY COLLEAGUES MAY HAVE OPINIONS ON THIS, BUT IT'S THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES THAT THE ISSUE OF THOSE MISSING IN ACTION MUST BE RESOLVED TO OUR SATISFACTION. AT THAT TIME WE WILL CONSIDER AN APPROPRIATE AGENDA FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

SENATOR DECONCINI: I DON'T RULE OUT SOME DAY HAVING NORMAL RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. WE HAVE THEM WITH MANY OTHER COMMUNIST NATIONS. BUT THE CLIMATE IS OBVIOUSLY NOT RIGHT NOW, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THIS HUMANITARIAN EFFORT THAT IS UNDER WAY AND STILL UNRESOLVED, BUT BECAUSE OF THE AGGRESSIVE INCURSION OF 160,000 TROOPS INTO CAMBODIA, A TOTAL DISREGARD OF ANY INTERNATIONAL LAWS AND BOUNDARIES. WITH THAT TYPE OF ACTION FROM NORTH VIETNAM AND NOT A WHOLE LOT OF INDICATION OF SETTLING. THAT, THERE CERTAINLY ISN'T GOING TO BE IN MY

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JUDGMENT ANY GREAT MOVEMENT TOWARDS NORMALIZATION
UNTIL THESE THINGS ARE RESOLVED.

CONGRESSMAN MCEWEN: I WOULD JUST LIKE TO UNDERScore
THAT. I THINK THAT'S THE APPROPRIATE ANSWER, AND
THAT'S THE FEELING IN THE CONGRESS, AS LONG AS THEY
HAVE 50,000 OCCUPYING TROOPS IN LAOS AND MORE THAN
TWICE THAT MANY IN KAMPUCHEA AND CONTINUE TO CONDUCT
A FOREIGN POLICY AGGRESSIVELY AGAINST THE INTEREST OF
THE ASEAN NATIONS, THEN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED
STATES DOES NOT SEEM OVERLY RECEPTIVE TO EXTEND A
HAND FORWARD.

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: I'D LIKE TO MAKE A CORRECTION ON
A STATEMENT I MADE CONCERNING THE OFFICIAL POSITION
OF OUR GOVERNMENT, THAT IS, THAT AMERICANS ARE
BELIEVED TO BE LIVING IN EITHER VIETNAM OR LAOS.
THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN OUR GOVERNMENT ASSUMES THE
POSITION AS OPPOSED TO WHAT I STATED WHICH WAS
"BELIEVED", AND THAT'S INCORRECT AND I'D LIKE TO MAKE
THAT CORRECTION AT THIS TIME UNTIL THERE IS EVIDENCE
TO PROVE OTHERWISE, WE ASSUME THAT THERE ARE
AMERICANS LIVING IN BOTH COUNTRIES.

Q. HAVE YOU DISCUSSED WITH THE VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS
THE OPENING OF AN AMERICAN OFFICE IN REGARD TO THE
MIA ISSUE?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: THERE WAS NOTHING ON OUR AGENDA
TO INDICATE OPENING AN OFFICE IN HANOI. AS WE DROVE
IN, I MADE THE INQUIRY AS WE WERE GOING THROUGH THE
VARIOUS EMBASSY AREAS WHERE OUR OLD EMBASSY RESIDENCE
WAS, AND THE CAR HAPPENED TO DRIVE BY IT. WE DID NOT
STOP; WE WENT IMMEDIATELY OVER TO THE GUEST RESIDENCE
WHERE WE WERE QUARTERED. WE DID NOT HAVE DISCUSSIONS
THAT WOULD INVOLVE ANY TYPE OF A PERMANENT
RELATIONSHIP, BECAUSE OUR MISSION WAS STRICTLY
HUMANITARIAN, AND SOMETHING LIKE THAT WOULD BE MORE
APPROPRIATE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OR THE STATE

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DEPARTMENT TO ADDRESS.

SENATOR DECONCINI: THE "CARROT" WAS OUT THERE ON THE
BASIS OF HUMANITARIANISM AS WE KEEP OFFICIALY
REFERRING TO IT AS ON THE LIVE SIGHTINGS THAT WE
WOULD HAVE A PRESENCE THERE CERTAINLY IF THERE WERE
AMERICAN INSPECTION TEAMS THAT CAME IN THAT, WITH THE
ACQUIESCENCE OF THE VIETNAMESE AND WITH THEIR
COUNTERPARTS, BE ABLE TO FOLLOW THESE LEADS. THEY
TURNED THAT DOWN, BUT THE SENATOR IS CORRECT AS TO
ANY OTHER DISCUSSIONS ON IT.

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: I THINK THAT'S A GOOD POINT THAT
SENATOR DECONCINI HAS MADE BECAUSE WE HAD
REINFORCEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER THACH THAT NOT ONLY
WOULD THE FEBRUARY MEETING TAKE PLACE BUT HE WAS
RATHER EMPHATIC IN STATING MEETINGS WOULD BE HELD
EVERY TWO MONTHS THEREAFTER TO BASICALLY ADDRESS THE
CONTINUED PROGRESS ON THE AREA OF EXCAVATING
REMAINS. HE INDICATED THAT AS A CONSEQUENCE, THERE

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WOULD BE A RATHER CONTINUOUS, OR AT LEAST THE PRESENCE OF SOME CONTINUITY OF AMERICANS INVOLVED IN THAT PROCESS, BECAUSE THEY'D BE THERE FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS.

THE QUESTION THEN WAS AN OBVIOUS ONE; "WELL, IF YOU HAVE AN AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THE SENSE OF JOINT EXCAVATION OF REMAINS, IS THERE A QUID PRO QUO?" I RESPONDED BY INDICATING THAT WITH OUR CAPABILITY ON THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS OF IDENTIFICATION AND, AS HAS ALREADY BEEN INDICATED BY MY COLLEAGUES, THE 300,000 VIETNAMESE THAT WERE MISSING IN ACTION AND UNIDENTIFIED, WE COULD OFFER THEM A TEMPORARY PRESENCE THROUGH THE STATE DEPARTMENT, IF IT WERE APPROPRIATE, IN HAWAII, IN THE STRICT HUMANITARIAN AREA OF WORKING WITH OUR IDENTIFICATION CENTER, AND THEY ACKNOWLEDGED IT, BUT NOT WITH MUCH ENTHUSIASM.

Q. WHAT IS THE IMPRESSION YOU HAVE OF CURRENT PROBLEMS REGARDING THE ODP (ORDERLY DEPARTURE PROGRAM) FROM YOUR DISCUSSIONS?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: I THINK THE QUESTION OF ORDERLY DEPARTURE IS ONE THAT THERE HAS BEEN SOME CONFUSION ON, AND I THINK WHAT IS OCCURRING NOW ON BOTH SIDES IS THE VERY REAL INTEREST TO GET ON WITH THE PROCESS, AND WHERE IT'S HUNG UP IN THE SENSE OF WHO'S RESPONSIBLE, WELL, WE CAN SPEND AN AWFUL LOT OF TIME EXERCISING THAT, IN REALITY. LET'S GET BACK ON TRACK. THAT WAS IN EVIDENCE BY THEIR WILLINGNESS TO ADVISE US THAT THEY INTENDED TO RESUME TALKS WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK, I BELIEVE, TO TWO WEEKS. THE ISSUE ITSELF AS I UNDERSTAND IT SEEMS TO BE THEIR CONTENTION THAT WE ARE NOT MOVING ON THE VISAS THAT THEY HAVE ISSUED. OUR CONTENTION IS THAT THEY ARE NOT GIVING US THE VISAS WE WANT. I WOULD HOPE THAT MY PERCEPTION IS CORRECT, THAT THEY INTEND IN HUMANITARIAN INTERESTS TO PROCEED WITH THE PROCESS.

SENATOR DECONCINI: WE RAISED THE ISSUE, AND I ASSERTED THAT I THOUGHT THEY HAD BEEN VERY SELECTIVE ON WHO THEY HAD CHOSEN. MR. THACH DIDN'T QUITE AGREE WITH THAT, OF COURSE, AND THAT ONCE THE VIETNAMESE HAD OFFERED TO TURN THEM ALL OVER, ALL THOSE IN RE-EDUCATION CAMPS UNDER THE ORDERLY DEPARTURE STATUS, SECRETARY SHULTZ SAID, "I ACCEPT"; THEY RENEGED AND WENT BACK ON THAT PROPOSAL AND CAME UP WITH ALL KINDS OF REASONS. THE BALL'S IN THE VIETNAMESE COURT. IF THEY WANT TO FULFILL THEIR

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NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO TURN THESE PEOPLE OVER, THE PROBLEM WILL BE RESOLVED. SENATOR MURKOWSKI IS RIGHT; THERE IS SOME RED TAPE AND PROBLEMS ON OUR SIDE BUT NOT THE PROBLEMS LIKE THE VIETNAMESE HAVE FAILED TO COME FORWARD AS THEY SAID THEY WOULD.

CONGRESSMAN BILIRAKIS: IF MY RECOLLECTION IS CORRECT, I BELIEVE IT WAS THE VICE MINISTER OR THE DEPUTY MINISTER WHO SAID THAT THEY ISSUED SOMETHING

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LIKE 60,000 VISAS, AND WE HAD INTERVIEWED SOMETHING
LIKE 20,000 OF THEM, BUT THERE ISN'T MOVEMENT ON OUR
SIDE, AND UNTIL THEY SEE THE MOVEMENT ON OUR SIDE,
THEY'RE NOT GOING TO ADD ANY MORE TO IT.

Q. YOU SAID THERE WOULD BE TALKS IN ONE TO TWO
WEEKS, TALKS ON WHAT? IS THE PROGRAM STALLED NOW?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: IT'S MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE
PROGRAM CURRENTLY IS STALLED TO THE EXTENT THERE HAS
BEEN RECALL OF THE PEOPLE WHO ARE HANDLING THE
INTERVIEWS. I WAS PLEASED, AND I THINK MY COLLEAGUES
WILL SHARE MY OBSERVATION, THAT IT APPEARS IN OUR
DISCUSSIONS THAT THEY ARE WILLING TO TALK IN A
POSITIVE MANNER AND TRY TO GET IT ON TRACK.

Q. DOES THAT MEAN THAT RIGHT NOW NOBODY IS BEING
PROCESSED? CAN THE AMBASSADOR RESPOND TO THAT?

AMBASSADOR BROWN: WE STILL HAVE PEOPLE COMING OUT.

Q. SENATOR MURKOWSKI, I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD
TELL US MORE ABOUT THE FAMILY BACKGROUND OF THE
CHILDREN THAT CAME OUT AS A RESULT OF YOUR PERSONAL
APPEAL. WHERE IS THE FATHER OF THE CHILDREN, AND WAS
HE CONSULTED ABOUT THEIR RELEASE TO THE UNITED STATES?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: FIRST OF ALL, I WANT TO MAKE IT
VERY CLEAR THAT THE ISSUE THAT WE WENT ON, ALTHOUGH
HUMANITARIAN, WAS DIRECTED TO THE MIA ISSUE, THE
MATTER OF EXCAVATIONS AND SO FORTH. THIS APPEAL WAS
MADE TO ME WHEN I WAS IN FAIRBANKS OVER THE CHRISTMAS
VACATION. I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH THE
MOTHER FOR THE FIRST TIME, ALTHOUGH I WAS AWARE THAT
OUR OFFICE HAD BEEN WORKING ON THE CASE, AND SHE GAVE
ME THE PAPERS THAT SHOWED A DATE OF 1983 AS RECEIVING
APPROVAL FOR THE CHILDREN BY THE UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT IN TRANSIT THROUGH THAILAND. I AGREED TO
TRY AND EXPEDITE THE PROCESS, WHICH I DID. THE
MOTHER IS MARRIED TO A CAUCASIAN IN FAIRBANKS,
ALASKA. SHE IS EMPLOYED BY AN OFFICE EQUIPMENT
SUPPLY COMPANY; HE IS AN AVIATION MECHANIC. THE
CHILDREN ARE CURRENTLY HERE IN BANGKOK IN THE COMPANY
OF A VIETNAMESE WOMAN. THE FATHER OF THE CHILDREN -
ONE OF THE CHILDREN WAS ADOPTED BY THE MOTHER. WE
HAVE A COPY OF THE ADOPTION PAPER. THE KNOWLEDGE
THAT I HAVE ON THE FATHER IS LIMITED TO WHAT APPEARS
ON THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE OF THE DAUGHTER, AND IT
LISTS THE FATHER AS A FARMER.

Q. SO AS FAR AS YOU KNOW, THE FATHER WASN'T
CONSULTED AT ALL.

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: I HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF THAT.

Q. WERE THE CHILDREN CONSULTED AS TO THEIR WISHES,
WHERE THEY WOULD LIKE TO BE?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: THE CHILDREN HAVE BEEN RAISED BY
THE SISTER OF THE MOTHER. THE SISTER LIVES IN A

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VILLAGE 70 MILES OUT OF HO CHI MINH CITY. THE SISTER
ACCOMPANIED THE CHILDREN TO HANOI.

Q. SO THEY WEREN'T CONSULTED EITHER...THE CHILDREN
THEMSELVES?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: I WOULD NOT MAKE THAT
ASSUMPTION. THE CHILDREN WERE OBVIOUSLY AWARE THAT
THEY WERE GOING TO THEIR MOTHER.

Q. AND HOW DID THEY REACT TO THAT?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: THERE WAS OBVIOUSLY A TEARFUL
PARTING, AND WE TRIED VERY, VERY HARD TO BRING THE
SISTER WITH US, BUT THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT WOULD
NOT ALLOW THAT. THERE WERE SOME VERY EMOTIONAL
APPEALS MADE. I THINK MRS. DECONCINI DID AN
EXTRAORDINARY JOB, BUT THEY HAD MADE A DECISION THEY
WEREN'T GOING TO EXPEDITE THAT REQUEST. AND AS A
CONSEQUENCE, IN SPITE OF THE PLEAS, WE DID THE BEST
WE COULD.

Q. WAS THE SISTER INCLUDED IN THE ORIGINAL ODP
REQUEST?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: NO.

Q. HAD THE MOTHER GOTTEN OUT OF VIETNAM AS A BOAT
PERSON OR THROUGH THE ODP?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: THE MOTHER CAME ACROSS KAMPUCHEA
(CAMBODIA) AS A REFUGEE AND HAS A VERY EXTRAORDINARY
STORY TO TELL.

Q. WILL YOU BE MONITORING WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE
CHILDREN IN ALASKA? WILL YOU MAKE SURE YOU STAY ON
TOP OF THAT?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: OH ABSOLUTELY. IT'S A TREMENDOUS
RESPONSIBILITY THAT I FEEL. BUT I INTEND TO TURN
THEM OVER TO THE MOTHER, AND I HAVE MET WITH THE
MOTHER AND I'M SATISFIED AS BEST I COULD POSSIBLY BE
THAT THIS IS ONE OF THOSE RARE OPPORTUNITIES THAT YOU
CAN DO TO BRING A MOTHER AND CHILDREN TOGETHER, AND
THAT'S ALL I CAN SAY. AND I WANT TO COMPLIMENT ALL
THE MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION WHO PLAYED A ROLE IN
BRINGING THOSE CHILDREN, IN THE SENSE OF THE
TRANSITIONAL PROCESS, AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'RE
GOING TO DO WHEN THEY SEE A LITTLE SNOW ON THE GROUND
FOR THE FIRST TIME WHEN THE AIRPLANE LANDS IN ALASKA.

SENATOR DECONCINI: I THINK THAT'S THE HAPPIEST THING
OF THIS WHOLE DELEGATION. WE'RE TRAVELING 12,000
MILES, HALF-WAY AROUND THE WORLD TO SEE THIS
REUNIFICATION.

Q. DID THE QUESTION OF CAMBODIA COME UP IN YOUR
DISCUSSIONS, FORMALLY OR INFORMALLY, WITH THE FOREIGN
MINISTER?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: I THINK SENATOR DECONCINI PERHAPS
COULD RESPOND. DURING OUR CONVERSATION IN LAGS, WE
HAD A PRETTY BROAD BRIEFING OF THE ENTIRE SITUATION.

SENATOR DECONCINI: SENATOR MURKOWSKI RAISED IT ON
BEHALF OF THE DELEGATION. EACH TIME WE MET WITH THE
FOREIGN MINISTER WE OF COURSE GOT AN OPPORTUNITY TO
RESPOND. THE VIETNAMESE SAID BY 1990 IT WOULD BE

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RESOLVED, PERHAPS A POLITICAL SOLUTION BEFORE THAT.
THEY WERE CRITICAL OF ANY INVOLVEMENT WE MIGHT HAVE,
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THE VIETNAMESE WERE, AS I INTERPRET IT. WE MADE IT
VERY CLEAR THAT THE UNITED STATES' POSITION AND THE
PUBLIC POSITION IN OUR COUNTRY WAS ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY
AGAINST WHAT THEY WERE DOING THERE. SOMEONE, I
BELIEVE IT WAS MR. MCEWEN, SUGGESTED AN INTERNATIONAL
SETTLEMENT OF IT. THEY SAID THEY DIDN'T NEED THAT,
BUT THAT THEY WERE GOING TO FIND A POLITICAL
SOLUTION, BUT BY 1990 THEY'D BE OUT.

Q. WERE THERE ANY CRITICAL REMARKS ABOUT U.S. AID TO
THE RESISTANCE IN ANY WAY?

CONGRESSMAN MCEWEN. NO. FIRST OF ALL, IN HANOI, WE
WERE GIVEN THE EXPLANATION THEY WERE ON THEIR
FIVE-YEAR PLAN, AND THAT BY 1990 ALL THE TROOPS WOULD
BE GONE, AND THAT THE SITUATION WOULD HAVE RESOLVED
ITSELF BY 1990, IF NOT EARLIER. SO, WE WERE NOT
SURPRISED WHEN IN VIENTIANE WE HEARD A SIMILAR LITANY
AS TO HOW THE SITUATION IN KAMPUCHEA WOULD RESOLVE
ITSELF. ABOVE AND BEYOND THAT, THERE WERE NO
DISCUSSIONS ABOUT AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT. THEY SAW IT
AS AN ISSUE WHICH THEY WERE RESOLVING VERY WELL TO
THEIR OWN SATISFACTION AND DIDN'T NEED ANY FURTHER
ADVICE.

Q. THIS IS NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO YOUR VISIT HERE,
BUT I'D BE INTERESTED TO KNOW: THE CONTINUING
RESOLUTION ON FOREIGN AID PROVIDES THAT IF A
DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED HEAD OF GOVERNMENT IS
OVERTHROWN BY COUP OR BY DECREE, THAT COUNTRY WOULD
BE CUT OFF FROM ALL U.S. AID. HOW DOES THAT AFFECT
THAILAND? LET'S SAY THE COUP THAT THEY HAD ON
SEPTEMBER 9 HAD SUCCEEDED, THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT
TOOK POWER, IS THAT AUTOMATICALLY BINDING? IS THERE
GOING TO BE ANY DICKERING OVER WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN
FROM THERE?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI. I'M ON THE FOREIGN RELATIONS
COMMITTEE, BUT LIKE SO MANY THINGS, I AM NOT TOTALLY
CONVERSANT ON THE SPECIFICS OF THIS ISSUE, BUT IT
WOULD SEEM TO ME THAT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE
PEOPLE OF THAILAND WOULD OVERRIDE ANY SITUATION THAT
MAY RESULT IN A COUP. WE HAVE A TREMENDOUS
COMMITMENT, A TREMENDOUS RELATIONSHIP THAT WOULD
CONTINUE, AND THE QUESTION OF WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IS
SPECULATION TO ANYBODY, DEPENDING ON WHAT THE
CIRCUMSTANCES ARE. THE FACT IS THAT IT DIDN'T
HAPPEN, AND THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS IN THAT
RESOLUTION THAT A LOT OF US ARE NOT SPECIFICALLY
AWARE OF. I WOULD SAY IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR
THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO RESPOND TO YOUR QUESTION.

CONGRESSMAN MCEWEN: CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS ARE
GRAB-BAG LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS TO COVER ALL THE BASES
FOR THE LEGISLATION THAT HAS EXPIRED, AND THEY LAST

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ONLY UNTIL SUCH TIME AS AN AUTHORIZATION OR AN APPROPRIATION IS PASSED. A CONTINUING RESOLUTION ALWAYS COMES AROUND CHRISTMAS TIME WHEN ALL OF THE WORK IS NOT DONE. IT IS ONLY OPERATIVE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS AN AUTHORIZATION OR AVNPROPRIATION IS PASSED, AND THAT COULD BE NEXT WEEK.

SENATOR DECONCINI: I'M VERY GLAD THAT THE COUP OR ANY EFFORT ALONG THAT LINE DIDN'T SUCCEED OBVIOUSLY. FOREIGN MINISTER SIDDHI WHO WE MET WITH HAS JUST BEEN PROMOTED, I GUESS OFFICIALLY, TO VICE PRIME MINISTER. HE MADE IT VERY CLEAR TO US THE STABILITY OF THIS GOVERNMENT, BUT ALSO HE MADE IT VERY CLEAR TO US THE OBJECTION TO THE FARM BILL AS IT RELATES TO

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THIS COUNTRY. HE DROVE THAT POINT CLEARLY HOME TO ME; I INTEND TO TAKE THAT MESSAGE BACK ON BEHALF OF THAI/U.S. RELATIONSHIPS, AND I'M VERY, VERY THANKFUL HE GAVE US THE TIME AND HIS CANDID APPROACH. HE CERTAINLY SERVED HIS GOVERNMENT VERY WELL IN EXPLAINING WHAT THE PROBLEM WAS WITH THIS FARM BILL AS IT RELATES TO RICE.

CONGRESSMAN MCEWEN: ON THAT VEIN, IF I MAY. WHILE IT DOES CAUSE US A GREAT DEAL OF CONCERN, CONCERNING THE FARM BILL, LET ME ALSO SAY THERE ARE VERY STRONG EFFORTS IN THE UNITED STATES TO BUILD SOME PROTECTIONIST LEGISLATION CONCERNING TEXTILES, WHICH IS ALSO A VITAL CONCERN TO THE THAIS. THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES VETOED LEGISLATION WHICH PASSED OVERWHELMINGLY THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE WHICH WOULD HAVE LIMITED IMPORTATION OF TEXTILES AND WOULD HAVE IMPACTED THE THAI ECONOMY SIGNIFICANTLY MORE, IN MY OPINION, THAN WOULD HAVE ANY RICE LEGISLATION. SO I THINK IT IS APPROPRIATE TO UNDERSTAND NOT ONLY AN ONGOING RELATIONSHIP THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT HAVE HAD WITH THE THAI PEOPLE AND THE THAI GOVERNMENT GOING BACK OVER GENERATIONS, BUT ALSO THE EFFORT OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO NOT DO ANYTHING THAT IS HARMFUL IN ANY WAY TO THE INTERESTS OF THE THAI PEOPLE OR THE THAI GOVERNMENT. I AM HOPEFUL THAT SOME OF THE COMMENTS THAT THAI OFFICIALS MAY FEEL COMPELLED TO MAKE AT THIS TIME WILL BE TAKEN IN THE CONTEXT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN STRONG EFFORTS IN THE UNITED STATES TO NOT DO ANYTHING THAT IN ANY WAY HARMS THE THAI ECONOMY.

SENATOR DECONCINI: LET ME JUST SAY THAT I AGREE WITH THE CONGRESSMAN ABSOLUTELY. RONALD REAGAN IS THE BEST FRIEND THE THAIS HAVE HAD IN A LONG TIME BECAUSE HE VETOED WHAT THE CONGRESS DID. THAT'S THE WAY OUR SYSTEM WORKS. AND THAT IS THE FINAL WORD IN OUR PROCESS, UNLESS OF COURSE THE VETO IS OVERRIDDEN. IN THIS CASE, THAT HASN'T HAPPENED, AND PRESIDENT REAGAN DESERVES THE CREDIT, AND I'M SURE HE WILL RECEIVE IT FROM THAI OFFICIALS FOR DOING WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS RIGHT. SOME OF US DISAGREED WITH HIM, BUT HE CERTAINLY EXERCISED THE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TO DO THAT, AND THAT OUGHT TO BE WELL RECEIVED IN THAILAND,

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AND PERHAPS IT HAS BEEN.

CONGRESSMAN MCEWEN: AND IT WAS WELL RECEIVED IN THE UNITED STATES AS BEING MORE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE THAI PEOPLE THAN IT WAS TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. AS I SAY, I HOPE THAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT WILL REMEMBER THESE EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN OUR STRONG AND LASTING FRIENDSHIP.

CONGRESSMAN BILIRAKIS: I MIGHT JUST ADD THAT THE CONCEPT OF THE LINE ITEM VETO KEEPS FLASHING ACROSS MY MIND AS WE DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT, AND THE QUESTION MIGHT BE RAISED WHY DIDN'T THE PRESIDENT VETO THE FARM BILL? WHO KNOWS WHAT HE WOULD HAVE DONE HAD HE HAD THE LINE ITEM VETO?

Q. IN VIENTIANE, DID YOU GET ANY DATE AND SITE YOU CAN GIVE US ON THE NEXT EXCAVATION?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: I DON'T RECALL A DATE. THERE WERE TWO SITES THAT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED, AND THEY WOULD BE SITES THAT WOULD BE JOINTLY EXCAVATED. I DON'T KNOW SPECIFICALLY THE SITES. IF THEY HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED, I THINK OUR GOVERNMENT DOES KNOW. THE DRY SEASON IS NOW, WHICH MEANS SOON.

Q. IN RELATION TO THE FARM BILL, WHAT SPECIFICALLY

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COULD CONGRESS DO TO ACCOMMODATE THAILAND ON THE RICE ISSUE?

SENATOR DECONCINI: WE HAVE JUST STARTED PLANTING RICE IN ARIZONA, BUT IT HAS LITTLE OR NO CONSEQUENCE TO THIS BILL, BECAUSE IT'S VERY MINOR. OUR BIG AGRICULTURAL CROP IS COTTON. BUT CONGRESS CAN INTRODUCE A RESOLUTION, A LAW CHANGING THAT IF THEY LIKE. THERE IS A LITTLE BIT OF DISCRETION, I'M ADVISED, BY OUR OFFICIALS AS TO THE SECRETARY'S ACTION IN THIS AREA. I THINK IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND EVEN IF IT IS COMPLIED WITH AND OUR SURPLUSES ARE PUT ON THE MARKET; THIS IS NOT DIRECTED TOWARDS THAILAND NOR ANY OTHER ALLIED TRADING FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES. IT IS A MEASURE THAT WAS DEMANDED OUT OF A NECESSITY ARISING OUT OF THE VERY, VERY SEVERE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF AMERICAN FARMERS. WE OBVIOUSLY HAVE TO CONCERN OURSELVES WITH THAT, WHETHER IT BE SOYBEAN, WHEAT OR RICE..

Q. FROM YOUR DISCUSSION WITH LAO OFFICIALS, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY THEIR PARTICULAR INTERESTS WOULD BE IN IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: I THINK THERE HAS ALREADY BEEN A CONSIDERABLE ADVANCEMENT INASMUCH AS WE HAVE REMOVED RESTRICTIONS ON AID TO LAOS. WE HAVE NO SPECIFIC, NON-HUMANITARIAN AID CURRENTLY TO MY KNOWLEDGE, BUT THERE IS CURRENTLY NO PROHIBITION. OUR HUMANITARIAN AID CONTINUES.

Q. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THEY WANTED?

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SENATOR MURKOWSKI: OUR DISCUSSIONS THERE, AND I THINK THIS WOULD PARTIALLY ANSWER THE GENTLEMAN WITH REGARD TO OUR MISSION; IT WAS A HUMANITARIAN MISSION DIRECTED ON THE QUESTION OF THOSE MISSING IN ACTION AND UNACCOUNTED FOR, AND WE HAVE ALREADY GIVEN YOU I THINK SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION ON THE PROGRESS THAT WAS SPECIFICALLY MADE SO I DON'T THINK IT'S NECESSARY TO REPEAT THAT.

Q. SENATOR, ABOUT THESE CHILDREN AGAIN, IS IT POSSIBLE, DO YOU THINK, THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE WANTED TO STAY WITH THE SISTER WHO HAS RAISED THEM EVER SINCE THEY WERE 2 AND 3?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: OBVIOUSLY, ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE.

Q. DID YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH MOVING THE KIDS WHEN IT WASN'T CLEARLY KNOWN THE WISHES OF THE KIDS THEMSELVES OR THE FATHER?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: TO ASK "MAYBE'S" AND TO RESPOND TO "MAYBE'S" IS NOT WHY WE'RE HERE. ANY OTHER QUESTIONS? THANK YOU.

(END TRANSCRIPT)

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END OF MESSAGE

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